POSITION PROFILE

President & CEO
Adventure Science Center
Nashville, TN
For over 75 years, Adventure Science Center (‘ASC’ or ‘the Center’) has served as Nashville’s premier science center for the entire family to enjoy.

Perched atop a hill and centrally located in the burgeoning neighborhood of Wedgewood-Houston with spectacular views of downtown Nashville, the 110,000 sq. ft. space features more than 175 hands-on exhibits focused on biology, astronomy, physics, earth science, energy, weather, sound and space. It is also home to the Sudekum Planetarium, a state of the art 63 ft. dome theater. With more than 239,000 annual visitors, ASC is dedicated to delivering innovative and dynamic learning experiences that open minds to the wonders of science and technology, fostering a better understanding of ourselves and the world around us.
ABOUT ADVENTURE SCIENCE CENTER

Adventure Science Center first opened its doors in 1945 as The Children’s Museum of Nashville located in the old University of Nashville building downtown. World War II was coming to an end and the nation was beginning to look towards the future.

As a founding trustee of the Children’s Museum of Nashville, Anthony “Tony” Sudekum shared the museum’s mission to inspire children to learn and explore the world around them. After his death, his widow, Nettie Elizabeth Sudekum, gave the museum $5,000 in his memory to build a dome named the Sudekum Planetarium and install a Spitz star projector. At that time, it was the only planetarium in Tennessee and one of only three in the South.

By the 1960s, the museum was quickly outgrowing the old building and more space was needed. Museum trustees negotiated with the Metro Parks Board of Commissioners to set aside part of Fort Negley Park, a fortification built by Union troops after the capture of Nashville, as the site of the new museum building. The museum is still located here today.

Over the years, the Center has evolved its brand and offerings to further engage the Nashville community beyond its children, introducing programs geared towards anyone with a sense of adventure. Through investments in progressive examples of hands-on education, the Center earned its current name.
Since its name change, the Center has doubled down on its commitment to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and sharing the wonders of science with the greater Nashville region. Centers like ASC play a distinctive role in advancing science literacy and igniting interest in careers within STEM. The Center engages with the Community in the following ways:

**EXHIBITS & ACTIVITIES**

With over 175 exhibits and numerous live action/demonstration spaces, the Center has no shortages of ways for visitors to experience science hands on. The well-known Sudekum Planetarium is one of the largest in the South and is supported through an endowment, committed to ensuring it remains a state-of-the-art facility. Since its opening, over twenty original shows have been produced and distributed by the Planetarium, with five receiving awards for scriptwriting and audio-visual production.

In addition to the Planetarium, there are numerous other exhibits that explore the laws of physics, the wonders of mother nature, human anatomy and more, while encouraging curiosity and innovation through dynamic and interactive learning experiences. Soundbox, a recent addition to the Center, is an exhibit created in partnership with local artists and the Nashville Symphony, celebrating Nashville’s Music City roots. This exhibit and others in the pipeline demonstrate the Center’s eagerness to collaborate with the local community and bring innovative programming to its visitors.

As Nashville has grown to become a global hub for cutting-edge healthcare and technology, as well as a destination for premier sporting events, ASC will unveil a new 9,500 sq. ft. exhibit that allows for in-depth exploration of human performance, the extraordinary feats human bodies are capable of and the ways in which we care for our bodies to keep them performing at their peak.
PUBLIC EVENTS

The Center hosts interactive in-person events to draw more people into the space. Events they have held in the past include: TWISTER (Tennessee Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, & Research), a full day conference aimed to empower women in 7th-12th grade to pursue STEM careers; the FIRST Lego Challenge, where teams build and program LEGO robots that compete in various obstacles; and Way Late Play Date after-hours events, designed to engage adults.

LEARN MORE:
adventuresci.org
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ASC has a robust education program, which is where the Center sees most participation from the community. Students come to the Center during the week to participate in science and technology labs and classes that emphasize hands-on, interactive learning experiences taught by engaging science educators. Additionally, families can sign up for semester-long programs that meet weekly at the Center. Each week offers a new subject, and the classes are geared towards children in kindergarten through 8th grade. 20,000 students from Metro Nashville visit the Center annually.

A vital component of the Center’s mission is ensuring everyone has access to the wonders of science, no matter their socioeconomic status. For this reason, the Center created the Adventure Access Program, which provides $300,000 a year to support free and subsidized admission tickets, memberships, field trips and camp scholarships. Through a robust partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, over 15,000 students took advantage of this program in 2021.

CAMPS

In addition to classes, the Center offers camps throughout the year for children to discover and examine STEM concepts. This includes options from day-long to week-long camps for kids. The camps provide students with an environment that fosters problem solving, teamwork, curiosity and critical thinking through hands-on activities, experiments and scientific exploration.
A pillar of the Nashville community, Adventure Science Center is at a pivotal moment in the organization’s history. As Nashville and surrounding cities have rapidly developed, the Center aspires to meet the needs of its growing and dynamic community. While celebrating its legacy of 75-years of service, the Center seeks to simultaneously craft and execute a new and innovate value proposition for the region, building trust and support of this vision in partnership with the broader Nashville community. In this next chapter, the Center will: grow its brand in the region and further cement it as a “must see” destination for all ages; expand its offerings to ensure it continues to be a hub for learning and innovation; and partner with and invest in the community to improve accessibility for the region’s culturally and socioeconomically diverse populations.

With the goal of establishing its reputation as an inclusive place for multigenerational engagement, the Center will craft a strategic plan that embodies this vision, including the modernization of its programming and exhibits. In honor of its 75th anniversary in 2020, the Adventure Science Center is committed to creating more than 15,000 sq. ft. of new exhibit space. To read more about the Beyond 75 campaign, visit here.
ABOUT NASHVILLE

A transformative moment for Nashville, the city and surrounding areas are some of the fastest growing in the nation. Nashville is a city known for its vibrant, creative and innovative residents who bring an array of cultural backgrounds. Over the past decade, Metro Nashville has experienced a boom in population with over 2 million residents calling the area home. One of the country’s top-ranked cities for economic growth, it is also widely known as a popular destination for college graduates. The Nashville lifestyle and benefits (such as no individual income tax) ensure people and companies flock to the region.

Nashville is home to many industries, including more than 500 healthcare companies that generate more than $92 billion in revenue. Recently, there had been a significant uptick in corporate relocations, with companies establishing offices or headquarters in the city. Other industries such as hospitality, tech, higher education, music and financial services have flourished in the region as well.

More companies are coming in large part due to the city’s reputation as a capital for learning and education. Nashville earned the nickname “Athens of the South” in the early 1800s in large part due to its dedication to learning. Today, the area is home to many nationally ranked universities, including Fisk, Vanderbilt, Belmont, Lipscomb and Meharry Medical School.

Widely known for its music heritage, Nashville is the epicenter of the worldwide country music scene. However, Nashville is known for much more than its music. Whether one prefers Broadway musicals, world-renowned art exhibits, professional or college sports, live music or proximity to the outdoors, Nashville has no shortage of cultural activities.
THE OPPORTUNITY

Adventure Science Center is seeking an innovative and strategic leader to usher this beloved institution into its next chapter of growth.

Reporting directly to the Board, the next President & CEO will lead overall strategic, operational and financial management of the Science Center. Working collaboratively with the Board, staff and community partners, the CEO will lead the Center in setting a clear vision for the organization’s next chapter, developing a strategic approach to maximize its impact across the region. This executive will lead an exceptional and passionate staff to fulfill the Center’s goal of delivering innovative and inclusive learning experiences for all.
Key responsibilities include:

• Lead all aspects of the Center, including operations, programs, partnerships, fundraising and financial oversight of a $7+ million annual operating budget and 45+ member staff.

• Maintain a collaborative relationship with the Board, staff and other constituents to redefine long-term goals, create, implement and evaluate the strategic plan.

• In partnership with Board and staff, evaluate and update the Center’s exhibits and program offerings to ensure they reflect the mission and vision of the Center.

• Ensure the Center’s organizational structure, systems and business practices adapt with a rapidly changing city and field, with a keen eye on investments in technology and opportunities for remote learning and engagement.

• Ensure the Board of Trustees is achieving its primary responsibilities of excellence in governance.

• The CEO will continue to develop, identify and cultivate new members, while creating opportunities for further engagement.

• Embody the Science Center’s values and serve as its primary spokesperson and advocate in the Community.

• Cultivate new partnerships and sources of funding by creatively and strategically expanding and deepening fundraising opportunities with individuals, corporations, foundations and the greater Nashville community.

• Promote, both internally and externally, a shared commitment towards embedding diversity, equity, inclusion and access in the Center’s day-to-day running as well as the delivery of its mission.
The ideal candidate will have the following professional and personal qualities, skills and characteristics:

A STRATEGIC & INNOVATIVE LEADER

The President & CEO will:

• Be a strategic leader with a growth mindset; eager and energized to develop and articulate a new vision for the next chapter of this storied organization.

• Work closely with a wide variety of constituents to create a cohesive, targeted strategic plan focused on expanding the Center’s capacity to serve the community.

• Bring a successful track record of translating mission and vision into innovative strategy, systems, culture and action.

• Be a transparent and purposeful decision-maker, ensuring that all constituents are informed, engaged, bought-in and understand their role in the vision of the Science Center.
A CHARISMATIC AMBASSADOR & RELATIONSHIP BUILDER

This leader will:

• Build and sustain excellent relationships with a broad range of constituents including existing and potential partners, with a focus on advancing the Center’s mission in the greater Nashville community.

• Have excellent communication skills and excel in all external aspects of the role, engaging other leaders and influencers in the area and serving as the primary ambassador for the organization.

• Bring a track record of successfully building relationships and trust with Boards, enhancing volunteer engagement and implementing best governance practices.

• Approach relationship building with humility and authenticity.

• Have a strong desire to embrace the growing Nashville community, its history and diverse cultures.

AN EFFECTIVE AND CREATIVE REVENUE GENERATOR & FUNDRAISER

The President & CEO must:

• Have a natural ability to act as a catalyst and inspire action in others.

• Bring a track record of overseeing and partnering closely with a development team to build a strategic and successful fundraising program involving individuals, corporations, foundations and other sources.

• Cultivate long-term relationships to ensure the financial viability of the Center.

• Bring a creative approach to further diversify funding streams and earned revenue, with an understanding of visitor experience, program income and major gift fundraising.

• Proactively seek out opportunities to increase the Center’s impact and reputation in Middle Tennessee and beyond, capitalizing on the region’s influx of potential new visitors, supporters, donors and corporate partners.
A STRONG LEADER OF OPERATIONS, TEAMS & CULTURE

This leader will:

• Have a track record of overseeing financial planning of a complex organization and ensuring fiduciary responsibility and sound financial management practices and accountability to a Board.

• Be skilled at building and leading high-performing and passionate teams, and guiding team members’ growth and development.

• Bring keen analytic, organizational and problem-solving skills which support and enable sound decision-making; ensure resources are efficiently deployed and empower others to contribute to the overall success of the institution.

• Be an inspiring, empathetic and approachable leader who brings a collaborative and inclusive approach to fostering a powerful sense of shared purpose.

• Work with staff to ensure the quality, scope and suitability of programs reflect the programmatic focus of the Center.

• Lead, enhance and maintain a culture of trust, high performance, accountability and fun.

• Have a rich understanding of and belief in the power of celebrating and advancing equity, inclusion, diversity and access at all levels, internally and externally.

• Set clear priorities, delegate responsibilities and allocate resources necessary for team members to run the Center and execute its strategy.
PASSION FOR THE MISSION

The individual will:

• Be a bold thinker who fully embraces the mission of the Science Center. Curious by nature, they will have an unwavering commitment to achieving the goals of the institution and expanding its impact in the local community and beyond.

• Be deeply community focused, with a strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and access.

• Serve as an advocate and enthusiast for cultural institutions with a consistent focus on the future of the field and how to best adapt and grow ASC in order to maintain its reputation as a premier local and national institution.

• Be an individual of unquestioned integrity, ethics and values — someone who can be trusted without reservation.

COMPENSATION

Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience. The compensation range for this position is $250,000 - $300,000 with an attractive benefits package.

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Adventure Science Center is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages expressions of interest from people of color, individuals living with disabilities, women and LGBTQ+ leaders.
Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Alison Ranney, Corina Benitz and Bryn Siberski are leading this search. To make recommendations or to express interest in this role please email adventuresciencecenter@koyapartners.com.

All nominations, inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

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